



CONGRESSMAN DAN LUNGREN

LISTENING TO CALIFORNIA'S 3RD DISTRICT

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Dear Friend,

We live in an amazing time. Today, it is possible to order a movie (DVD) from a computer, make travel arrangements via the Internet and play a game of chess with some one else half-way around the globe. Our kids and grandkids are in many ways on the cutting edge of technology.

With Internet use at an all-time high, it should be no surprise that online social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook have become increasingly common and have a tremendous influence among today's youth. For instance, just two years ago MySpace had 4.9 million users, but today that number is 100 million.

In addition, parents should know that of potential risks associated with these online social networking sites. A survey of 1,500 youth has revealed 1 in 7 received sex solicitations; 1 in 3 had been exposed to unwanted sexual material; and 1 in 11 had been harassed. Furthermore, MySpace has identified more than 29,000 registered sex offenders with profiles.

While responsible use of social networking sites can be beneficial, irresponsible use of these sites can be destructive. The risk involved with using the Internet and social networking sites can be greatly reduced if some common sense safety precautions are implemented, without compromising the experience and rewards of living in the Technology Age.

Depending on the ages and type of Internet activity, some of the following suggestions may be helpful for parents with online children:

1. Be sure to keep open lines of communication with your children. Ensure that they know what information they should not be giving out online and what to do if a problem ever arises.
2. Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) may include Internet filtering features that will allow you to block certain sites or content. Computer monitoring software is also available.
3. Know the account information for your children, including log-in names and passwords. Check their e-mail periodically for problematic use.
4. Make house rules for computer and Internet use and post the rules near the computer.
5. Have the computer in a common area.
6. Remember that your children are not the only ones that

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could be posting sensitive information (names, addresses, phone numbers, schools, etc.) online; your children's friends might be doing so too.

For younger users:

1. Don't post personal information. This doesn't just include names, addresses and phone numbers. Information about your school, sports teams, or similar things can give clues to who you are and where you can be found. And remember – a picture is worth a thousand words. Check the backgrounds of your photos to make sure you aren't unintentionally revealing private information.
2. Many social networking sites will allow you to decide who can access your information. Make sure you know what your privacy settings allow and adjust them appropriately.
3. Don't meet people you first met online, especially if you don't have any mutual friends.
4. Don't respond to hostile communication.
5. Save and print questionable activity with the date and time.
6. Remember that many sites have conditions of use. Do not hesitate to report offenders.

The best defense from online predators is education, awareness and vigilance. Therefore, I recently cosponsored a bill, the Deleting Online Predators Act of 2007 (H.R. 1120), that would direct the Federal Communications Commission to issue a warning about the dangers of child predators using the Internet to victimize children and to develop a website that would serve as a resource for those wanting to protect their children from online dangers. The bill is currently being considered by the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, part of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

If our Gold River office can be of assistance on this or other problems, please contact us at 916-859-9906. Our office is here to help. Finally, if a crime is committed, you can file a complaint online at www.ic3.gov.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Lungren
Member of Congress

Congressmen Lungren periodically sends e-mail newsletters to constituents of the 3rd District to inform them of issues before the Congress and provide generally helpful information. If you would like to unsubscribe, you are free to do so here. If you unsubscribe you will no longer receive Congressman Lungren's emails.

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